

Hougas

(2)

February 10, 1958

Dr. Lyman B. Jackson, Dean
College of Agriculture
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, Pennsylvania

Dear Dean Jackson:

I have your letter of the 5th inquiring about Dr. Hougas. I will be happy to answer your questions to the best of my ability. I have known him for almost ten years and can recall that I had a very high impression of his abilities as a student. He appeared then and appears now to be a very well organized person and I would summarize my overall impressions by the thought that he was indeed born to be a departmental chairman.

I have to remark that our scientific interest has not overlapped to any considerable extent over the past several years. He has as you know been primarily responsible for the inter-regional potato research project. Although the department of genetics has the responsibility for that activity, Dr. Hougas' own professional interests have leaned more towards plant pathology. He has in any case been more intimately concerned with administrative duties than with research by his own hands. Despite the mission to which he has been dedicated in recent years, I believe that he has a fundamental respect for basic research and that if this were his mission and he had the opportunity he would encourage a balanced program. I do suspect that such a program would tend to lean towards applied research but this would depend to a large extent on his colleagues.

My own description of his relationships with his colleagues would be only a paraphrase of your question. He does indeed have a very healthy measure of personal ambition and drive but this has in no instance impaired his very friendly working relationships with his own staff and with other members of the department.

The best way that I can answer your question with regard to his qualifications for your appointment would be that many members of this department will be very sorry if he leaves. This is true even despite the fact that his professional orientation is rather more favorable for botany and plant pathology than it is even in genetics.

Hougas, L.E.

Dr. Lyman E. Jackson
Page 2 - February 10, 1958

I see no reason why my remarks should be withheld from anyone who has a legitimate interest in them.

Perhaps you had consulted me precisely because I was not so immediately involved in Dr. Hougas' activities. I am sure that Dr. Grun in the same department must be very well acquainted with Hougas both from a scientific and administrative point of view on account of their mutual interest in the development of Solanum. Professor Brink of the genetics department would probably be best able to assess his professional qualifications as a scientist. My own considered view is that he would be very well qualified indeed for a scientific administrative position in the light of the experience that he has had with the inter-regional potato project here.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Medical Genetics

JL/ew